



# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

2018 - 2020

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	Pages 3 - 4
<b>Summary of Board of Directors/Senior Management Retreat</b> November 30, 2017.....	Pages 5 - 7
<b>Summary of Strategic Planning Listening Session for Partners</b> December 1, 2017.....	Pages 7 - 8
<b>Summary of Employee Strategic Planning Retreat</b> December 1, 2017.....	Pages 9 - 10
<b>Goals and Action Plans</b> .....	Pages 11 -16
<b><u>Agency Goal #1</u></b> -- To develop and implement a successful succession plan for three agency leaders.....	Page 11
<b><u>Agency Goal #2</u></b> -- To thoughtfully assess restructuring personnel and operations of NOCAC. .....	Page 12
<b><u>Agency Goal #3</u></b> -- To produce and implement an external communications plan to better define its services and operations.....	Page 13
<b><u>Agency Goal #4</u></b> -- To determine which community partnerships are effective and which need to be added, revised and/or replaced.....	Page 14
<b><u>Agency Goal #5</u></b> -- To assess transportation options for residents of the six counties in NOCAC’s service area.....	Page 15
<b><u>Agency Goal #6</u></b> -- To continually be responsive to community needs by evaluating existing programs and adding new or eliminating programs/services.....	Page 16
OCATO and Consultant Credentials and Experience .....	Page 17

## **Executive Summary**

Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission, Inc., (NOCAC) engaged in Strategic Planning with the Ohio Community Action Training Organization (OCATO), beginning in October 2017. Prior to engagement with OCATO, NOCAC conducted community surveys and a community SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis in each of its six counties in addition to an analysis of existing data about the nature of poverty in the territory covered by NOCAC. Engagement with OCATO added the outcomes of three retreats – the Board of Trustees/Senior Management; Community Partner listening session; and Mid-Level Management/Direct Service staff.

Community Needs Assessment – In 2017, NOCAC produced a comprehensive needs assessment which was used with all three retreat groups as a starting point for discussion. The needs assessment included the following sections:

SWOT Analysis – the following priority areas were identified overall from the six-county area:

1. Strategic, Formal Partnerships
2. Community Connectivity
3. Community Reinvestment by the Agency
4. Operational Integration
5. Community Re-education (communications/marketing)

Community Surveys -- In 2017, NOCAC distributed 1,500 surveys to individuals and families in its six-county service area to ask them to identify needs. 377 surveys were returned (a 25% response rate). The most significant needs identified among NOCAC consumers, employees and community partners were the same, but not necessarily in the same order:

1. Affordable housing
2. Reliable transportation
3. Jobs that pay a better (living wage)

Three retreat sessions – Board/Senior Management, Community Partners and Mid-Managers/Direct Service employees – produced the following themes:

- Great support for and excitement about NOCAC exists.

- NOCAC will undergo a significant transition in senior leadership by the end of 2020, preparation for successors. At the same time, NOCAC will assess the need to restructure its staff and programs to better align them to be effective in meeting future goals.
- External communications is challenging due to the expansive six-county service area and available monetary resources to market the agency and its programs/services.
- There are many community needs in NOCAC's six counties, but also many opportunities to partner with other organizations to meet those needs.

The reader is encouraged to review all of the notes from each of the retreats to review individual ideas. For example, expanding transportation options might include offering car maintenance workshops so low-income individuals have more reliable vehicles.

It should also be noted that the strategic goals are highly inter-related. For example, the scope of future re-structuring may determine which new program areas are addressed and which new partnerships are pursued first.

Based on all of the above-mentioned data and the notes on pages 5 -10, the following outcomes/goals were established for the agency:

**Agency Goal #1** -- To develop and implement a successful succession plan for three agency leaders.

**Agency Goal #2** -- To thoughtfully assess restructuring personnel and the operations of NOCAC.

**Agency Goal #3** -- To produce and implement an external communications plan to better define its services and operations.

**Agency Goal #4** -- To determine which community partnerships are effective and which need to be added, revised and/or replaced.

**Agency Goal #5** -- To assess transportation options for residents of the six counties in NOCAC's service area.

**Agency Goal #6** -- To continually be responsive to community needs by evaluating existing programs and adding new or eliminating programs/services.

In conclusion, the staff, Board and management of NOCAC were dedicated to the strategic planning process. The agency made a commitment of time and energy to ensure that all levels of the organization and critical stakeholders were included in the process and had ample opportunity to provide input to the vision and goals of the plan. This version of the plan highlights the final action plans and goals for the next three years. However, space for years four and five are included on the goal/outcome sheets for longer-term planning.

# Board of Directors/Senior Management Retreat

November 30, 2017, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Attendees:** Board Members -- Rachelle Durham, Dean Genter, Bob Hastedt, Lewis Hilkert, Amy Hoffman, Mark Holtsberry, Dennis Miller, Bill Rufenacht, Victoria Schelling, Kathleen Sworden, Karen Zeedyk; Senior Management – Deb Gerken, Janet Yaros, Angie Franklin, Kim Reed, Kelly Feeney

## PROCESS OVERVIEW:

The OCATO facilitator met with the Board of Directors/Senior Management Team of NOCAC at the Sweetwater Chophouse in Defiance.

“Read All About It” Exercise -- After introductions, all participants were asked to imagine the headlines of a local newspaper in the future 10 years or more. What would the headlines state about NOCAC?

Following are most of the responses:

NOCAC Continues Head Start Program for Northwest Ohio

NOCAC Expands 0-3 Year Olds Program  
Job Preparation Continuum Includes FEP

NOCAC’s Mentoring Partnership Program Changes Rural Employment Picture

NOCAC One Stop for Helping So You Don’t Have to Go from Place to Place

NOCAC Helps To Reduce Poverty Level to A Record Low

NOCAC Is Expanding

NOCAC Serves Record Number of Clients

NOCAC’s Comprehensive Array of Programs and Services Has Significantly Impacted the Effects of Poverty on Local Residents

Poverty Rates Reduced Locally Attributed to Comprehensive Programs and Services Provided by NOCAC

Additional Funding Received for Transportation Program at NOCAC  
New SRO Apartments Open for PATH Clients  
Solar Energy Now Included in Weatherization

NOCAC Had A Record Year of Helping People to Improve Their Lives, Even Better Year Projected for This Year

NOCAC Takes Over All Social Services for Area Counties

NOCAC Has Early Head Start Program

NOCAC Graduates 2000<sup>th</sup> Person from Getting Ahead Program

Great Advancements Are Happening for NOCAC, More Community Involvement

Head Start Is Now Serving Pregnant Moms, Infants and Toddlers  
Offering Transportation

NOCAC: Educational Outreach, Senior Home Improvement Programs

Two key questions were asked of the group:

1. What do you think of the direction of NOCAC?
2. What should the agency focus on from 2018-2020?

The combined answers of those questions are listed below:

More empowerment

- continuum of empowering to change lives/employment/skills
- family breakdown
- education/career

Succession Planning

- establish search committee
- develop transition plan
  - mentoring new person
  - who? Degrees? Next generation leadership
- cross training
- restructuring (ie. Finance Director now oversees programs and the Executive Director manages HR).

Working together to support transportation coordination

More housing efforts

- senior housing repair (especially in Paulding)
- coordinate with volunteer groups
- mental health house
- case management for homeowners
- examine data, especially from Maumee Valley Planning Organization
- home maintenance (need for more classes?)

Workforce Development

--complex issue

--soft skill development

--expanding FEP (Financial Empowerment Program) based on needs

Parent education in defined partnerships

## Strategic Planning Listening Session for Community Partners

Dec. 1, 2017, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

**Attendees:** Kristen Junga, Children’s Resource Center; Alyssa Gonzales and Violet DeVault, Woodforest Bank; Tara Brodbeck, Bryan Community Health Center; Bill Lammers, The Dream Center; Tonie Long, ADAMhs Board; Justin Kuhn, Hicksville Buisnessman; Carrie Wetstein, Defiance County United Way; Marcia Drake, Van Wert County Department of Job & Family Services; Matthew Spiess, Maumee Valley Planning Organization; and Hayley Studer, Community Partnerships Credit Adjustments. Staff attending were: Deb Gerken, Kim Reed, Janet Yaros, Angie Franklin and Dustin Fuller

Introductions were made.....

How does your agency currently interact with NOCAC?

Resource information

Client referrals

Support services (high school teachers/kids) MOU

Housing projects

Financial coaching

First point of contact (Van Wert, Fulton, Henry)

Connect volunteers to NOCAC (United Way Community Engagement)

Teach financial education (FDIC education)

Fundraising for NOCAC and others

Direct healthcare

Provide funding (transportation and

Provide volunteers (facilitators)

The following key questions were asked:

- a. What other things should be noted in the Community Assessment?
- b. What should the agency focus on from 2018-2020?
- c. In what ways can your organization partner with NOCAC?

Other Needs or Amplify Needs in Assessment:

How to maintain a home – classes? Happens for weatherization  
Basic car repair classes  
Work with Dream Center on above two?  
Jobs with a living wage (high demand jobs brochure would be helpful)  
Soft skills (schools, parent education)  
Work with Comprehensive Case Management Employment Program, STEM,  
Apprenticeships  
Expand Bridges Out of Poverty  
Support for entrepreneurs (Maumee Valley Planning Organization)  
Lack of skilled labor staff (plumbing, electrical, general construction laborers, welding,  
manufacturing, advanced manufacturing - robotics)  
Re-entry programs  
Career path  
Affordable housing (key issue with homeowner hoarding) – provide case management,  
link more with mental health?)  
Conditions of homes  
How to build? Infrastructure, tiny homes?  
Coalition on affordable housing  
Volunteer driven home repairs (Dream Center collaboration)

Other Areas for Agency Consideration:

Communication/marketing of services

Guidance counselors at schools and police departments  
ESC for NW OH – Superintendents’ meeting  
Mental health counselors in schools and case managers (Wood County example)

Collaboration

Regional meetings of providers – expanding for each county

Quality of Life (joy) Activities

Expand to more  
Identify funding

Parenting Skills (CRC)

Connecting with other parents

Nutrition – mental health linkage, also non-mental health linkages, basic cooking information,  
farmers’ markets

Transportation

Coordination (Defiance County only)  
More CDLs

Car repair maintenance  
Uber-like services  
Vouchers for taxi cabs (taxis not in most counties)  
Marketing on transportation options (mobility manager will address)

## Employee Strategic Planning Retreat

Dec. 1, 2017, 1 – 4 p.m.

**Attendees:** Amy Zipfel, Hilaree Carlisle, Amber Simmons, Jacki Teegarden, Amy Herren, Amy McMaster, Dustin Fuller and Rey Romero

Each person introduced himself/herself to the facilitator, stating his/her name, job duties and years of service.

“Read All About It” Exercise -- After introductions, all participants were asked to imagine the headlines of a local newspaper in the future 10 years or more. What would the headlines state about NOCAC?

Poverty Rate Down 5% as NOCAC Programs Flourish  
Community in Northwest Ohio Spelled NOCAC

NOCAC: Invested in the Community  
Committed to Community Needs  
Taking Action  
Making a Difference

NOCAC Programs Data Report Decrease in Welfare Recipients  
NOCAC FEP Now Offered to High School Seniors  
NOCAC Head Start Now Offering Services to Infants and Toddlers

NOCAC Has Helped to Serve # Families in Our Five County Area  
How can we help service you?

Northwest Ohio Hunger and Homelessness at All-time Low Due to NOCAC’s Prevention Programs

NOCAC Able to Expand Local Homeless Shelter to 8 Rooms  
NOCAC Receives Funding to Help Clients with Water Bills and Deposits

NOCAC Continues to Provide Needed Services  
NOCAC Has Done It Again, Supporting Families in Need  
NOCAC Programs: Community Game Changer, Supportive Programs Changing Lives

NOCAC: Changing Future Stories  
NOCAC Clients Testify to Success

NOCAC Has Helped More Than # Families Out of the Poverty Guidelines and Has Helped Local Community Grow

What do you think of the direction of NOCAC?

- Increasing prevention focus
- Professional development (opportunities for community partners)
- Living Wage and employment services
- Additional staff for program expansion
- Examine program effectiveness
- Data collection and reporting
- No consistent onboarding process
- Building internal relationships
- Need an HR director and EAP (Employee Assistance Program)
- Wage increases
- Self-sufficiency outcomes
- Succession planning (timeline, transition period, consultant, regular staff updates)
- Not enough marketing (internal and external)
- Diversify funding sources/collaboration

What should the agency focus on from 2018-2020?

Housing

- More marketing in entire service area
- Better weatherization training
- More staff
- Hoarding
- More housing repair for the elderly

Transportation

- Mobility manager
- Taxi vouchers
- Uber-like agencies
- Accessibility

Nutrition -- mobile food pantry year round (with meat)

Mental health services – children/adults

Parenting skills

Agency Goal # 1

**Outcome: A seamless transition of senior leadership to new leaders by 2021**

Goal (Destination)		Rationale (Identifies the reason (motivation) for the goal)							
<b>To develop and implement a successful succession plan for three agency leaders.</b>		NOCAC will be losing about 100 years' worth of experience with the retirement of three NOCAC senior leaders – the executive director, the finance director and the Head Start director.							
Objective: (Performance Target) - Must be stated in quantifiable or measurable terms and must be date bound; measures success.									
Three newly hired and trained senior staff will be in place by the beginning of 2021.									
Strategies - Ideas on "What to Do"	Responsible Party	2018				2019	2020	2021	2022
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec				
<b>1.1</b> Determine Board process for recruitment and hiring of a new executive director. (Will agency funds be available for a transition period for outgoing/incoming executive director?)	Board					X	X		
<b>1.2</b> Determine whether a consultant will be hired to help with the transition.	Board					X			
<b>1.3</b> Determine qualifications/pay scale for new hires.	Board					X			
<b>1.4</b> Screen/hire new directors.	Executive Director					X	X		
<b>1.5</b> Develop onboarding (mentoring) of new hires.	Board/Executive Director					X	X		
<b>1.6</b> Implement transition of retiring directors to new hires.	Board/Executive Director						X		

**Agency Goal # 2**

**Outcome: Restructuring agency leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness.**

Goal (Destination)		Rationale (Identifies the reason (motivation) for the goal)							
<b>To thoughtfully assess restructuring personnel and the operations of NOCAC.</b>		Currently the agency has a sufficient structure, due to tenure/knowledge of current senior managers; however with their departure by the end of 2020 restructuring will be necessary to provide specific areas of expertise.							
<b>Objective: (Performance Target) - Must be stated in quantifiable or measurable terms and must be date bound; measures success.</b>									
To enhance agency operations through re-alignment of duties and functions.									
Strategies - Ideas on "What to Do"	Responsible Party	2018				2019	2020	2021	2022
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec				
<b>2.1</b> Establish committee for restructuring.	Directors		X						
<b>2.2</b> Review/analyze current organizational structure	Directors/ Mid Managers		X						
<b>2.3</b> Determine preferred structure.	Directors				X				
<b>2.4</b> Review/update each key job descriptions to reflect new structure.	Directors/ Mid Managers					X			
<b>2.5</b> Implement/communicate new structure to staff and key stakeholders.	Directors					X	X		

**Agency Goal # 3**

**Outcome: Enhanced external communications will improve community awareness.**

Goal (Destination)		Rationale (Identifies the reason (motivation) for the goal)							
<b>To produce and implement an external communications plan to better define its services and operations.</b>		NOCAC has greatly improved its communications in the last five years, but community awareness can still be improved upon in some areas. NOCAC Continues to be perceived as being a governmental entity by some.							
<i>Objective: (Performance Target) - Must be stated in quantifiable or measurable terms and must be date bound; measures success.</i>									
NOCAC will produce an external communications plan to include internet presence and other ways reach the public.									
Strategies - Ideas on "What to Do"	Responsible Party	2018				2019	2020	2021	2022
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec				
<b>3.1</b> Convene internal committee to focus on development of an external plan.	Directors IT staff, Mid-Managers		X						
<b>3.2</b> Determine scope of plan and who will be charged with implementation.	Directors IT staff, Mid-Managers			X					
<b>3.3</b> Maintain up-to-date agency website quarterly and regular social media posts.	Directors IT staff, Mid-Managers			X	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing		
<b>3.4</b> Determine other metrics for measuring plan's effectiveness.	Directors IT staff, Mid-Managers			X	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing		
<b>3.5</b> Implement/evaluate plan.	Directors IT staff, Mid-Managers				X	Ongoing	Ongoing		

Agency Goal # 4

**Outcome: NOCAC analyzes existing partnerships and enhances community connectivity**

Goal (Destination)		Rationale (Identifies the reason (motivation) for the goal)							
<b>To determine which community partnerships are effective and which need to be added, revised and/or replaced.</b>		NOCAC has a history of partnering with other organizations to successfully deliver services, but it wishes to analyze those relationships and potentially renew/replace those partnerships in order to increase community connectivity.							
<i>Objective: (Performance Target) - Must be stated in quantifiable or measurable terms and must be date bound; measures success.</i>									
To systematically review all partnerships and determine how to improve, renew and/or replace partnerships.									
Strategies - Ideas on "What to Do"	Responsible Party	2018				2019	2020	2021	2022
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec				
<b>4.1</b> Prepare agency-wide list of all partnerships – formal and informal.	Directors Mid- Managers				X	ongoing	ongoing		
<b>4.2</b> Determine and set criteria for determining effectiveness of existing relationships.	Directors Mid- Managers				X	ongoing	ongoing		
<b>4.3</b> Determine new strategic partnerships that should be pursued in each program area.	Directors Mid- Managers				X	ongoing	ongoing		
<b>4.4</b> Revise/eliminate certain partnerships.	Directors Mid- Managers				X	ongoing	ongoing		
<b>4.5</b> Establish new partnerships.	Directors Mid- Managers				X	ongoing	ongoing		
<b>4.6</b> Regular review effectiveness of partnerships.	Directors Mid- Managers				X	ongoing	ongoing		

**Agency Goal # 5**

**Outcome: Transportation options will be explored and expanded in NOCAC's service area.**

Goal (Destination)		Rationale (Identifies the reason (motivation) for the goal)							
<b>To assess transportation options for residents of the six counties in NOCAC's service area.</b>		Reliable transportation has been a perennial need identified in NOCAC's service area. NOCAC has a new grant for Mobility Management in Defiance County; which may be able to be replicated in other counties.							
<b>Objective: (Performance Target) - Must be stated in quantifiable or measurable terms and must be date bound; measures success.</b>									
New transportation options will be explored (and implemented, if feasible) in each of NOCAC's counties.									
Strategies - Ideas on "What to Do"	Responsible Party	2018				2019	2020	2021	2022
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec				
<b>5.1</b> Examine existing transportation options with new mobility manager.	Executive/Comm Serv Directors		X	X	X	ongoing	ongoing		
<b>5.2</b> Determine efficacy of transportation coordination for Defiance County.	Mobility Manager				X	ongoing	ongoing		
<b>5.3</b> Determine potential options for other counties.	Mobility Manager					X	ongoing		
<b>5.4</b> Implement feasible options, based on available resources.	Directors Mobility Manager					X	ongoing		

**Agency Goal # 6**

**Outcome: NOCAC will evaluate program effectiveness and add/eliminate programs.**

Goal (Destination)		Rationale (Identifies the reason (motivation) for the goal)							
<b>To continually be responsive to community needs by evaluating existing programs and adding new or eliminating programs/services.</b>		NOCAC’s strategic planning process has identified new areas for program Expansion (housing, employment, transportation). NOCAC will analyze existing programs and proceed with new programs as resources allow.							
<b>Objective: (Performance Target) - Must be stated in quantifiable or measurable terms and must be date bound; measures success.</b>									
All programs will be evaluated annually for effectiveness and new areas explored as resources allow.									
Strategies - Ideas on “What to Do”	Responsible Party	2018				2019	2020	2021	2022
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec				
<b>6.1</b> Determine criteria for determining program effectiveness.	Directors			X					
<b>6.2</b> Implement new needs assessment to determine program relevancy.	Directors Mid Managers		X	Ongoing	Ongoing	New Assessment			
<b>6.3</b> Explore/implement new programs especially in the areas of housing, employment and transportation.	Directors Mid Managers					X	Ongoing		
<b>6.4</b> Enhance existing programs and eliminate ineffective ones.	Directors Mid Managers					X	Ongoing		

# OCATO

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The Ohio Community Action Training Organization has a training and technical assistance grant from the Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Community Assistance, to provide training and technical assistance to Community Action Agencies in the Ohio Community Services Network.

OCATO has assisted many Community Action agencies in completing or revising their strategic plans. The model utilized by OCATO is adapted from ***The Institute of Cultural Affairs, Technology of Participation: Participatory Strategic Planning.***

The focus of this methodology is on getting maximum interaction and participation from various levels of the community and organization. This is done through both focus groups, survey tools, and follow-up encounters. Below is a summary of the five principal areas of the work OCATO engages with agencies to develop their strategic plans, and their strategic thinking:

- Vision
- Current Reality
- Goals
- Action Plans
- Commitment

The Action Plans are customized to meet the ROMA (Results Oriented Management and Accountability) Model that Ohio CAAs utilizes as a requirement of their CSBG (Community Services Block Grant) funding.

## OCATO Consultant

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The OCATO Consultant that provided the Strategic Planning Services for NOCAC is Jeffrey Diver. Mr. Diver has been an OCATO Consultant for 11 years. His areas of expertise include: strategic planning, “Bridges Out of Poverty,” grant writing/fundraising, public relations, and family development.

He has 22 years’ experience in Community Action. Programs under his purview have received 21 “best practice” awards from local, state and national organizations, including 16 from the John Glenn Institute for Public Policy and Public Service at The Ohio State University.

Prior to coming back to Ohio, he served as the field director of a national child safety campaign headquartered in Washington, DC. His department provided technical assistance and training to chapters across the country through workshops, site visits and verbal and written communications on membership growth and development, public/private partnerships, public awareness campaigns, and advocacy issues. While in Washington, he authored by invitation nine articles and presented at 50 state and national conferences on building successful public/private partnerships, positive leadership, and grassroots organizing. A taped copy of one presentation was a top-seller with the American Society of Association Executives in 1996.